

CHEMISTRY OF MATERIALS

VOLUME 13, NUMBER 1

JANUARY 2001

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Editorial

Chemistry of Materials in 2001: New Developments and Perspectives

For the Materials Science discipline, the past year has been a very special one indeed! Both the Nobel Prizes in Chemistry and Physics were awarded for fundamental scientific discoveries and research accomplishments in electronic devices and materials, enhancing the visibility and exposure of this research field and of the materials research community as a whole. Please join us in extending warmest congratulations to Drs. *Alferov, Kilby, and Kroemer* (Nobel Prize in Physics) and to Drs. *Heeger, MacDiarmid, and Shirakawa* (Nobel Prize in Chemistry) for this special recognition!

There has also been the sad news of the sudden loss of our distinguished colleague and board member, Professor *Olivier Kahn*, who died on Dec 8, 1999. We will honor his memory in gratitude for the many important contributions he has made to the field of materials chemistry and to this journal.

As we enter the year 2001, the terms of service have come to a close for a number of our Editorial Board members. We sincerely thank all of them for their dedicated service on the board over the years. At the same time, we would like to welcome nine new colleagues who have agreed to serve on the board for the next 3 years, and we are looking forward to working with them. *Chemistry of Materials* remains committed to its key objective to provide a forum for work in materials-related chemistry and to highlight the pivotal role of chemistry as a source of new materials and approaches to materials processing. Ever since its inception, this concept has proven very successful, and over the past decade we have witnessed a continuous and healthy growth in papers submitted (to well over

1000 this last year) despite increased competition from other materials journals produced by commercial publishing companies.

Nevertheless, an increase in size also leads to higher production costs, which must eventually be passed on to the subscribers. In this context, the American Chemical Society has established "page budgets" for each of its journals that relate directly to the costs of producing that journal. The goals of staying within these page budget limitations while retaining leadership status within the materials community are united by our uncompromising commitment to high standards of quality and significance. Our goal is to publish work that is highly innovative, of excellent technical quality, and of broad general interest to the materials community. Studies that are not sufficiently chemistry-oriented or those that are largely routine or too narrow in focus are typically directed to the specialist's literature. For manuscripts considered as *Communications*, particularly high standards of originality and significance must be met to justify accelerated publication. To apply these standards, rigorous peer review is indispensable of course, and our sincerest thanks go to the many referees who have devoted tremendous effort, countless hours, and their balanced scientific judgment toward maintaining the high *Chemistry of Materials* publication standards. Currently, our rejection rate lies near 50% of all the manuscripts received. The e-mail templates we started sending beginning Jan 2000 were immediately adopted by a large number of referees and are becoming increasingly popular. Furthermore, in our effort to decrease the average length of published

articles, we have been asking the reviewers to judge the conciseness of manuscripts submitted and to make specific suggestions for cutting down the size of manuscripts that are over 30 double-spaced manuscript pages in length. We will also continue to impose a stringent 1500-word limit on *Communications*. Indeed, the steps we have taken have already resulted in a nearly 10% reduction in the average page length of *Articles* published during the past 2 years.

In recognition of the broad interest in the subject among the readers of this journal, we have decided to devote one of the 12 issues during 2001 to papers in the area of **Organic–Inorganic Nanocomposite Materials** (see *Call for Papers* in the July 2000 issue). This issue will be the fifth in a continuing series of special topical issues that serve to highlight recent progress in areas of broad interest to the materials chemistry community. It will be coedited by two of our Associate Editors, Hellmut Eckert and Mike Ward, and will feature *Short Reviews* on selected topics in the subject area as well as *Articles* and *Communications* reporting significant new findings. To avoid publication delays, there will be a strict deadline for the receipt of papers for this special issue of **January 31, 2001**. All papers will be subject to the customary peer review procedure, and the format for the papers and the criteria for publication will be the same as those for any other issue of this journal. In an effort to control the overall page size for this issue, we will hold strict limits on the length of both *Communications* and *Short Reviews* (a maximum of 10 journal pages or 50 double-spaced manuscript pages) (see *Notice to Authors*); moreover, authors of *Articles* that exceed the 30 manuscript page guideline will be asked to provide a detailed justification for the extra length that will be submitted to the reviewers for their consideration along with the paper. Papers will be published on the World Wide Web as soon as they are approved for publication, while the print version of the paper will be held for the special issue.

Starting with our Nov 2000 issue, *Chemistry of Materials* also introduced a new *Comments* section. This section will be open to authors and readers who wish to comment on any aspect of a published paper. Thus, *Comments* are technical contributions that provide new information or an alternative perspective regarding a prior publication in the journal. These may include additional information from one or more of the original authors that changes or modifies the conclusions reached in their prior publication as well as comments, reinterpretations, or corrections that are provided by others. All of the original authors are given the opportunity to provide an appropriate rebuttal or addendum. The final decision regarding publication of a *Comment* will rest with the assigned editor, who may choose to seek the

advice of one or more expert reviewers before reaching this decision. All *Comments* will be limited to a maximum of 250 words and cannot include figures or illustrations; however, the submission of supporting data, figures, etc. that might be useful to the editor and/or reviewers in evaluating the case for publication of the *Comment* is strongly encouraged. The *Comments* section will not replace the *Additions and Corrections* section, which can still be used by authors, mainly to report corrections that they wish to have noted for their published papers.

The staff of the Editorial Offices as well as at the American Chemical Society Journal Publications office in Columbus, Ohio are fully committed to the prompt and smooth handling of all manuscripts and to minimizing delays of any sort. Currently, the median “response” time between manuscript receipt and report back to the authors lies below 2 months, and the median time from acceptance to publication on the web currently is 7 weeks for full *Articles* and 3 weeks for *Communications*. Details of manuscript handling will remain unchanged from the procedures implemented during the past year, except for one important change: Authors who are reporting crystal structural data need to send in CIF files to the ACS as soon as the paper is assigned a manuscript number. Our reviewers have pointed out their need to have access to these files to properly evaluate the validity of the structure determination. For further details, please refer to the *Notice to Authors* printed in this issue. We will continue to offer color reproduction free of charge subject to approval by the handling editor. Furthermore, we will continue using an illustration provided by an author in the issue for the full front cover of the journal. Authors of review papers are given the first opportunity to provide a candidate illustration, but if a given issue contains no reviews, we will select a cover illustration from other papers in that issue. For this reason, all authors are encouraged to submit potential illustrations (preferably in color) for consideration when their paper has been accepted for publication. Please see our *Notice to Authors* for details regarding the preferred format for such illustrations.

Over the years, numerous improvements implemented for our journal have come from suggestions received from its readers. We look forward to continuing close interactions with authors, reviewers, and readers and welcome your comments, suggestions, and criticism. Best wishes for a happy and successful 2001.

Hellmut Eckert
Associate Editor

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